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Almost instinctively Nick grasped his rifle and looked inquiringly in the direction indicated by the dog.

THE BLACKFOOT QUEEN; OR, Old Nick Whiffles in the Valley of Death.

A Sequel to *Phantom Princess*, Concluded on Second Page.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,

Author of "The Phantom Princess; or, Ned Hazel, the Boy Trapper."

CHAPTER I.

FOUR YEARS AFTERWARD.

Four years have passed, and the short, beautiful summer of the North-west has again folded mountain, prairie and stream in its loving embrace. The sky is clear and bright with sunshine, the streams, except among the mountains, are free from ice, and the face of nature is very different from what would be expected so soon after such severe weather.

In front of a rough, grotesque cabin, which has already been described to my reader, sits Nick Whiffles, cleaning his rifle. Although four years have passed since we last saw him, there is scarcely any perceptible difference in his appearance. In the grizzled beard which covers the greater part of his face, there may be seen a few more straggling hairs, but that is all. The eye is just as bright, the step as firm and powerful, and the smile as genial as ever. He is dressed in the same hunter costume, and so far as he is concerned, it seems that a few days only have passed since his participation in the rescue of Hugh Bandman and the Phantom Princess.

A short distance away, the rotund, sleek Shagbark is browsing the rich, succulent grass, and at the side of his master, with his nose between his legs, dozes his dog, Calamity.

Four years have made their mark in the career of Calamity, although he still bears up well under them. He is somewhat unwieldy in his movements, and has become quite fond of basking in the warm sunlight, and of sleeping by the blazing fire during the terrible cold of winter. Perhaps he is a little more surly to strangers, too, and is disposed to resent undue familiarity upon the part of any one. But he loves Nick as well, and his dangerously-sharp teeth are ready to be used in his service at any time.

The old hunter seems to be in a reverie this afternoon, and his motions in cleaning his weapon are almost mechanical, his thoughts being far away upon different matters altogether.

Suddenly he stops polishing the already-gleaming rifle-barrel that is stretched across his knees, and with one hand pressing down and grasping it, and shoving his coon-skin cap back from his forehead with the other, he exclaims:

"I swow to gracious! if it ain't four years ago this very summer sin' Ned left me, with

pulled a good stroke with the famed Oxford crew of his own country.

He paused a moment in front of the hunter, and then, with beaming face, walked rapidly toward him, holding out his hand.

"How do you do, my old friend? God bless you, Nick Whiffles, have you forgotten Ned Hazel?"

Nick mechanically took the proffered hand, slowly rose to his feet, and with open mouth stared at the young man in a dazed sort of way, as though he did not understand what it all meant.

"What's the matter, Nick? Have I changed so much that you don't know me? Why, I knew you the minute I placed eyes on you," continued the sportsman, laughing in a way that showed his handsome white teeth, while he shook the hand of the trapper with such violence that his whole body partook of the vibration.

"Thunderation!" finally gasped Nick; "can it be possible? Are you my own Ned? Why, you war a boy when you left me, and then I've heerd tell of folks gettin' married as old as my father would be if he were living to-day."

He smiled a few moments in the enjoyment of his own fancy, and then his face became sober again.

"No; the day has gone by for Nick Whiffles to think of such things. He is married to the woods, and perearies, and mountains, but Miona, if Ned hasn't forgot his promise, it'll pay him to come out here to see her.

It's about a month sin' I was through the village, and she looked purty 'nough to fly off like an angel. She hasn't forgot Ned, neither, and axed me about him; but I could tell her nothin'! All I know is that Ned and his old man went to England, as they call it, in the same vessel that carried Hugh and the Phantom. There's been a trapper down here every spring to ax about the gal, that I s'pose Hugh and his wife sent, and there's no danger of their forgetting her—Hello!"

At this juncture, Calamity threw up his head, pricked up his ears, and uttered a growl—an indication that some stranger was at hand. Almost instinctively Nick grasped his rifle, and looked inquiringly in the direction indicated by the dog.

"What is it, pup?" he demanded, in an undertone; "any call for powder and ball?"

The reply speedily came. The crackling of the undergrowth was heard, and the next moment a young man in the jaunty costume of an English sportsman stepped into the clearing. He wore the velvet cap, coat and vest, the high-topped boots, the leather covering the knees, the powder-flask at the side, and the richly-mounted rifle of the professional hunter of civilization, and there was an ease and self-possession in his manner acquired only by long and genuine practice in hunting game.

The countenance of the young man was frank and prepossessing, with his dark, hazel eyes, the ruddy, rose-tinted cheeks, and their soft "mutton-chop" whiskers. He was of a muscular mold, and would have

been a good stroke with the famed Oxford crew of his own country.

"A short month ago, and she was as well and purty as ever; but, how is it you're here, Ned? You was to wait five years, and that won't be till another winter has come and gone."

"You're right, Nick; but, do you suppose I could content myself away from her any longer? I did my best; I have been to school, and studied hard; indeed I am by no means through with my schooling yet. I finally told the folks that I couldn't stand it any longer, and they gave their consent; so I took the first ship for Fort Churchill; Bandman and his wife came with me, so as to be here to meet us. I reached the fort about a month ago, and found a small party just getting ready to start to Oregon. As I was pretty well known at head-quarters, I was given charge of the half-dozen men, and began working our way down to this point. We intend to visit the village, if it is safe, and barter with them; but, of course I couldn't pass anywhere near you without stopping to see you, and then, before I go near the place, I want to learn how the land lies, and to engage you to accompany us."

"Where are the men?"

"A number of miles up the river; I came on ahead, and made an appointment to meet them to-morrow morning near the bend; so I am going to spend the afternoon and night with you."

"I only wish it was going to be a year," remarked Nick, with a tremulous voice.

"I've been counting the months I would have to wait for you, and I never dreamt you war goin' to cut 'em short, by a whole year."

"But you ain't sorry, I am sure," exclaimed Ned, in his hearty way, as he struck his hand upon the knee of the smiling trapper.

"Your hair is as soft and silky as it was then, your eyebrows are the same, and there's the scar where the grizzly b'ar nipped you with his nail, and your cheeks are as red as ever, but them condemned whiskers, they spoil you."

"I fancied they were rather becoming," said the young man, with a rueful face, as he caressed them with his hand; "however, I know you still doubt my identity?"

"No; I b'leve you're the ginuwine animal, and we'll shake hands ag'in on it. God be thanked, Ned, I'm glad to see you. Set down, set down; Calamity don't know you, although he's eying you purty sharp."

"How are you, pup?" said Ned, turning toward the dog, and patting his head.

Perhaps, away down in the lowermost depths of the memory of the animal was a dim, flickering shadow of the handsome individual before him, and a faint gleam of intelligence lit up the eye of Calamity as he gazed at him. At any rate he knew he was the friend of his master. That was sufficient, and seating himself upon his haunches, he gazed contentedly upon the two men.

The two friends sat down on the log, side by side, and Ned said:

"Before going any further, Nick, let me ask you when you saw Miona last?"

"A short month ago, and she was as well and purty as ever; but, how is it you're here, Ned? You was to wait five years, and that won't be till another winter has come and gone."

"You're right, Nick; but, do you suppose I could content myself away from her any longer? I did my best; I have been to school, and studied hard; indeed I am by no means through with my schooling yet. I finally told the folks that I couldn't stand it any longer, and they gave their consent; so I took the first ship for Fort Churchill; Bandman and his wife came with me, so as to be here to meet us. I reached the fort about a month ago, and found a small party just getting ready to start to Oregon. As I was pretty well known at head-quarters, I was given charge of the half-dozen men, and began working our way down to this point. We intend to visit the village, if it is safe, and barter with them; but, of course I couldn't pass anywhere near you without stopping to see you, and then, before I go near the place, I want to learn how the land lies, and to engage you to accompany us."

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lovers, who are looking hopefully forward to the time when she is to become a wife."

Nick Whiffles turned and looked sharply in the face of his young friend, and then answered, in a startling voice:

"You're right!"

"Explain!" commanded Ned, turning pale.

"I've a spicion of one man. Thar may be plenty of others—and I make no doubt that is—that would give thar heads for her, but that's only one that she need be afraid of, and that's Red Bear, the son of the old chief Woo-wol-na."

"What about him?" demanded the lover, with a painful eagerness.

"Mind, the gal hasn't told me any thing, but I spicion, fact is, I'm sartin, that they've fixed that she shall be his squaw."

"In the face of the solemn agreement—"

"Mighty!" interrupted the trapper, "what's all the trainin' I give you amount to? Haven't you larn a red-skin's nastur yet?"

"If they had given any reason to believe that they intended to keep their part of the agreement, none would be more conscientious in keeping mine; but, as they intend to perpetrate a great wrong, I shall now do my utmost to get her out of their hands, with as little delay as possible."

"You're right," said Nick, "and here's my hand upon it. We'll go down to the village together, and look round to see how things look, and arter that we'll fix the way we're goin' to act."

"There's no danger of my identity being suspected."

"Not much," laughed the trapper. "I don't b'leve the gal herself can be made to b'leve it's you till arter you've spent a week in swearin' to it, and then, arter all, she'll think it's your big brother."

"In that case, we will go together to the village. Oh! if I could but see her!" he exclaimed, springing up in his excitement.

"One look, one glance at her—I would walk a thousand miles to get it."

"P'raps you needn't go quite so fur as that, though they're apt to keep her powerful shady when white folks ar' about."

They sat in delightful converse, until the evening was drawing to a close, when Nick looked up.

"It's gettin' dark, and we'll go in, take supper, and start bright and airy in the mornin'."

"Have you any traps set?"

"Yas; but they don't need lookin' arter, and we'll tend to 'em in the mornin'."

The two walked into the hermit-like residence, where they ate their old-fashioned supper together, and then followed a long talk in which each gave the other the particulars of his life for the previous four years.

Finally they lay down and slept.

CHAPTER II.

WHERE WAS HE?

Long before the sun was up, Nick Whiffles and Ned Mackintosh were astir. The old hunter had a number of traps, from which during the winter he managed to secure a most valuable lot of peltries. His experience and intimate knowledge of the country, taught him where to search for the haunts of the otter and beaver, and he always had a nice little income from his furs, caught during the winter.

It was with strange emotions that the young man made his round of the traps. Every thing looked familiar—the appearance of the trees and vegetation, the smell of the woods, the clear, stinging air—all revived powerfully the memories, that had almost faded during the rush of events, during the four years that had been spent in another hemisphere and among scenes the very antipodes of these.

But here he had spent his childhood, and never could these scenes and incidents be forgotten.

In each of the half-dozen traps visited, was found a good plump beaver, every one of which was killed and dressed by Ned's own hand, and they reached the cabin again and made their breakfast upon the delicate tails of the creatures.

Then they took a half-hour's ramble in the woods, the young man bringing down an antelope with a skill which elicited the admiration of the veteran trapper, who declared it was done almost as neatly as he could have done it himself.

"I have kept up my practice at home," replied Ned. "There our hunting is somewhat different from this, but both require good marksmanship, and I can never lose the taste I acquired for it under you; but my men will be at the bend and we have lit time to lose."

Calling out a jocund farewell to Shagbark, lazily munching the grass, and accompanied by Calamity, who seemed to be unusually frisky this morning, Nick plunged into the woods, and led the way toward the river along which he had spent so many years of his life.

As they reached the bank, a long Indian canoe was found there, and the six men, upon being called, speedily made their appearance. They were hardy, brown-looking fellows, all acquainted with Nick and glad to meet him.

Courageous and fully armed, they had greater fear of the North-west men than they had of any Indians, and they made particular inquiries of Whiffles as to whether they were liable to encounter them on the river or not.

The trapper had seen and heard nothing of them during the spring, but he could not guarantee either their appearance or their non-appearance at any time. So, he advised the Hudson Bay men to be on the lookout.

Suspecting that they were in advance of

the North-west traders, the little party pulled with a will down-stream. They were in too dangerous territory to fancy it much, and having no wish to have another collision with the members of the great rival company, of course they used every effort to make their stay as short as possible.

"Do you see that?" asked one of the trappers, as they stepped into the canoe, pointing at the same time to a rigid scar across the upper part of his nose. "Wal, one of them blamed Nor'westers done it, and as long as we've got such a small company, my advice is to steer clear of 'em."

They kept the keen "look-out" as they journeyed along, but were greatly relieved at the end of a couple of days, when they rounded to in front of the village, without meeting any other white men.

It was arranged that Nick Whiffles should act his old part of "go-between," or interpreter, Ned Mackintosh landing with him. The first person with whom they exchanged a word was Red Bear, who came to the water's edge with his father to meet them.

As may be supposed, the young lover scrutinized his savage rival, with any thing but amiable feelings.

"Confound him!" he muttered, as he glanced sideways at him, "it would do me good to bury three or four balls from my revolver in your skull. The idea of your pre-stumping to the notice of my Miona!"

With a heart fluttering with hope, he looked here, there and everywhere in the hope of catching a glimpse of the girl herself, but not the first indication of her was discovered, and, at a sign from Nick, he withdrew, leaving him to carry on the interview alone.

While the bartering and exchange was going on, the old trapper stood apart talking earnestly with Woo-wol-na and Red Bear.

Mackintosh feigned to take no notice of them, but, as may be supposed, his interest was no less than theirs; and, when his friend came back to him, and they put out in the stream, he could scarcely restrain his impatience.

Nick speedily explained.

"I s'w to gracious if I could hardly keep my hands off both them old rips!" he exclaimed, with considerable feeling.

"What did they say?"

"You know they've never objected to my seeing the gal, when I axed fur her. The fust thing I done, was to ax 'em to let her come down and have a word or two with me; (you see I wanted you to git a sight of her,) and what do you think they said?"

"I am sure I can not tell."

"That she was gitting ready to git married to the scalawag of a Red Bear, and she hadn't time. It was mighty hard work when I heard that, to keep from making a condemned difficulty with 'em, but I held in, and, just for the fun of the thing, axed 'em what they was goin' to do when the friends of the gal come after her next spring. They said, that wouldn't make no difference. She was the pledged wife of Red Bear, and they made any muis, she'd be put in the *Death Lodge* and there'd be the end of it."

Ned gnashed his teeth.

"Why didn't I shoot him at once? If I had known it, I couldn't have prevented myself."

"Hold on!" said Nick, with a fatherly wave of his hand. "I got mad enough fur both of us. We've larned how the land lays, and now we'll go to work."

"Nick," said his young friend, after a few minutes' thought, "I feel that I can't go back without seeing Miona. As she is undoubtedly in the village, what is to prevent my getting out of the boat and going back and watching my opportunity?"

As may be supposed, the trapper opposed this, but the young fellow pleaded, and the old hunter, out of his great love, consented against his judgment, that the attempt should be made.

So, when they had ascended the river about a half-mile, and were beyond all sight of the village, he was put ashore.

It was about the middle of the afternoon, and the agreement was that Ned was to be on the spot by dark. He intended to approach as nigh the village as was safe, and there to wait in the hope of seeing her. If it were possible, he wished to communicate with her, apprising her of his presence, and what he and Nick proposed doing for her.

If he should fail to see her at all, he gave his promise to be at the spot by nightfall.

The traders had orders to continue on up the river and make all haste into British territory, where there was no danger of being molested by the dreaded Nor'westers.

Nick Whiffles, left alone with Calamity, sat down on the ground to await the return of his young friend with the stoical patience of an Indian himself.

Not until the night was considerably advanced did he feel any misgiving. Still he waited and listened, until at last, the gray light of morning filled the woods, but still there was no Ned Mackintosh.

"What kin be the difficulty?" he muttered, as he and Calamity took the trail and followed it; "if they've harmed my Ned, I'll skulp every Blackfoot this side the Rocky Mountains. Hyer's the trail of the lad as plain as day; take it, Calamity, and we'll foller it to the end. Ef he's in the wigwam of Woo-wol-na or Red Bear, he's got to come out, and ef he's in that infarnal *Death Lodge*, I'll burn it down, by mighty!"

The gray eyes of the trapper lit up with a furious gleam, and there was no mistaking his deadly earnestness, as with long strides he struck into the woods, following close to the dog, who, with nose to the ground, was on the trail of the young hunter, and keeping it with the certainty of a Siberian blood-hound.

But an' a sudden "difficulty" presented itself; for scarce a hundred yards were passed, when he came to a small creek, the existence of which he had entirely forgotten. A short examination showed that Ned had entered a canoe, which was evidently lying there, and supposing he had crossed, Nick adjusted his rifle and swam over; but to his surprise there were no indications of the canoe having landed, either above or below the place.

He spent the entire day in searching the banks of the creek, following both sides up and down for fully a mile, and using Calamity to assist him. The result was nothing.

The second morning he visited the village, and day after day was spent in searching for his "dear Ned," dearer now than ever, and yet he obtained not the slightest clue.

He was completely baffled, foiled, and finally in despair he turned his back upon the Blackfoot village and sought his lonely home in the wilderness, feeling as though it would be a relief to throw off the burden of life, and take his departure to his last resting-place.

But he could not content himself in idleness and he soon renewed the vain hunt.

CHAPTER III.

THE "CONDENMED DIFFICULTY" OF ALL.

"Of all the condemned difficulties that I've ever been in, this year's the worst," muttered Nick Whiffles. "I thought it was purty bad when me and Calamity got separated that night in the storm, when my canoe upset, and Calamity landed in the wrong place, and my gun sunk to the bottom, and the snow was falling so fast that I couldn't set the length of my nose ahead of me; wal, that war a difficulty, and no mistake; but this yer's wust nor that."

He heaved a great sigh, that showed how deep his feelings were, and looked plaintively out on the river flowing by. He was quite a distance from home, and was standing on the bank of the stream, upon which he had hunted and trapped so often.

He had now spent the greater part of a week in hunting for his young friend Ned, who had so strangely disappeared while searching for Miona, and ye had discovered no clue at all. He had visited the Blackfoot village, and with a daring that attested his affection, as well as his bravery, had actually put some searching questions to Red Bear.

"And he answered them as inerrest as a lamb, too," muttered the trapper, "but, for all that, I know that the old copper-skin could tell me all about him, if he war a mind to open them lips of his. I don't know whether Ned has gone under, or whether he still floats his sticks, but somehow or other I think he's walkin' the earth, and I hope I shall soon see him ag'in, though it ain't sartin, he added, as if to reproach himself for this sudden spasm of hope.

"It's put me and you to our stumps, Calamity," he added, looking down with his old quizzical smile, at his dog sitting at his feet. "We've tramped the woods night and day, but it didn't do no good. Ned left in a canoe, and you and me, pup, hain't larned to track a man over the water yet, though we've tried it often 'nough."

He stood a few minutes longer, looking out on the surface of the river, with that absent, meditative manner, which showed how much his heart was enlisted in the work he had undertaken.

"Now, I understand it all," replied the girl, speaking as though some new light had just broken in upon her mind.

"I saw you both; why didn't you ask for me?"

"Ask for you? That's about all that I did do, and wasn't I told that you war so busy gettin' ready to be married to Red Bear that you didn't time to see other folks?"

"Were you told that?" asked Miona, with a pale, terrified look.

"Yes; and more too. They told me that you had agreed to marry Red Bear—though I knowed that war a lie—and they didn't intend to give you up, and that if anybody tried to take you, you would be put in the *Death Lodge*."

"Now, I understand it all," replied the girl, speaking as though some new light had just broken in upon her mind.

"Hain't that varmint bothered you any?"

"I could not help seeing, for a year past, that Red Bear was quite an admirer, but he has always shown me a certain deference, and has never pressed matters."

"He ain't ready yet—when the time comes, he will do fast enough. How is it you're allowed to run loose?"

"I have always consented to keep out of sight when we had visitors, and only when they supposed none were near have I been permitted to take my canoe, or hunt in the woods, but I nearly always have a companion, and even now I expect soon to be joined by the sister of Red Bear, who is to meet me a little way up the river.

"But, Nick," said Miona, rousing herself with an Amazonian dignity, "we must find Ned, if he is living!"

She pronounced the last clause in a tremulous voice, and looked appealingly to the trapper, who hastened to say:

"I think he's above-ground—and now, Miona, can you meet me here to-night?"

"I will, if you wish it."

"Have you larned or heerd nothin' that woke your 'spicions?"

"Not a syllable."

"Then go back to the village, and don't show you spect any thing, but do all you kin to find out what has 'come' of Ned. You're smart, and I b'lieve you kin do it. Meet me here, jist as the moon is up, and tell me what you've larned."

The girl promised that it should be done. At that moment, she saw no way by which she could secure a half-hour's absence from the village, but she was resolved that it had come to him from his mortal enemy.

The knowledge that she had gained of the proposed treachery of Woo-wol-na and the Red Bear, showed her her danger, and the necessity of her doing her utmost to get out of their power, and the knowledge that, under Providence, the fate of her lover depended upon her skill and daring, made a veritable Joan of Arc for her a time.

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then addressed himself directly to Woo-wol-na, speaking in the Indian tongue.

"What do you want?"

"They belong to us," replied the chief, referring to his companions; "we have come for them."

"Do you want me?" he asked.

"You deserve death," said the sachem, in effect, "but years ago, when I and a few of my warriors were overwhelmed by the Shoshene, you fought by my side; Woo-wol-na has not forgotten that day, and on that account he will not harm his brother, the great hunter; but your companions belong to me, and I must have them."

"They are man and wife," said Nick, still using the Blackfoot tongue; "why do you wish to separate them?"

Stoical as was the Indian, it was plain to see that he was surprised by this information, but it did not affect his resolution.

"He has been condemned to death; he has slept in the Death Lodge, and he must die."

"Is there no sacrifice we can offer that will answer for his life?"

Curiously enough, Woo-wol-na was struck with the question, and he consulted for several minutes with his warriors. Then with a peculiar expression, he turned back again.

"Is she his daughter?" he asked, pointing to Myra.

"She is."

"And they wish her to go with them?"

"They value her life like their own."

"Leave her with us, and the rest may go."

This remarkable proposition of course was understood by all except Bandman, to whom Nick explained it.

"No," he replied, indignantly, "we will die before we will desert our daughter, will we not, Myra?"

"A thousand times, yes," she added, pressing her darling child to her breast.

Nick Whiffles now displayed characteristic cunning. Waiting until the tumult had somewhat spent itself, he asked the mother:

"Why do they want the gal to stay?"

"The chief has a son, that he hopes to make a great warrior, and he always said Miona should be his wife."

The eyes of the old hunter sparkled.

"That's no likelihood then but what he'll take the best care of her, and suffer no one to abuse her?"

"Of course; that is what he is after."

"How old is the gal?"

"Only thirteen."

"Suppose I tell him you're willin' to leave her five years, and to give her leave to marry his son, if he chooses—will you do that?"

"Oh! how can I—"

"Hold on," interrupted Nick, rather sternly, "he's got the power to take you all, and, by mighty! it's queer he don't do it. I think it's only his likin' for me that hinders him. You've a chance to save yourself and husband by takin' his offer, and you're a blamin' fool if you don't do it."

"But, to desert her, Nick—think of it!"

"It's hard, I know, but I calculate, if the Lord's willing, to spend the next five years and more in the woods, and I'll promise to look after the gal. I'm the only white man that dare go into that Blackfoot village, and I'll do it, and when the five years come round you shall have your darter, if I have to lose my scalp in gettin' her. No red Injin'll make a squaw of her."

"And what says my own precious Miona?"

"For your sake, mother, it is best. I shall be happier than you can imagine in doing it. I shall be always cheerful in the knowledge that I am not lost to you. I shall long for the five years to come round, but I shall not pine nor regret, for I know that Nick Whiffles will keep his word."

"I swoon gracious! but she's an angel!" exclaimed Nick Whiffles, as he drew his sleeve across his eyes. "I'm yer daddy for the next five years, fur sure!"

Nick now resumed his negotiations with Woo-wol-na, who at first rejected them; but he finally consented, and the agreement was made. She was to spend five years among the Blackfeet, and then, if she still desired to return to her friends, she should be free to do so.

This was a great falling off from the original purpose of the Blackfoot chief; but his friendship for Nick Whiffles had a powerful influence in the matter, but, like a true Indian, his secret intention was that when five years were up, she should still remain with him and become his daughter-in-law, in spite of herself and everybody!

And equally Nick Whiffles' intention was that she never should marry any Blackfoot—he had other purposes in view!

This arrangement was hardly completed, when Mackintosh and Ned Hazel made their appearance in their canoe. They had pursued their way leisurely down-stream, meeting them at this place.

Poor Ned was in consternation when he learned all that had been done, but while Miona was a heroine, he could be a hero. As he shook hands with her and bid her farewell he whispered:

"Remember, I promise to come for you!"

His face, as well as his tone and words, told how deep was his feeling for the beautiful child of the wood.

"I shall expect you," she replied, fixing her dark eyes upon him, from which gleamed the light of pure, abiding love.

Then she was transferred to the other boat, and the sad parting took place—a parting long to be remembered by every participant.

Nick Whiffles listened to the story of Mackintosh, and said in his own characteristic manner:

"I'm glad as a man can be, but it's hard, by mighty! and I'm sorry, too!"

And the strong-hearted man, who never quailed in the face of danger, turned away and wept.

It was like robbing the parent bird of its nestling; or tearing from the sturdy oak the vine which had lovingly, through rains and storms, through sunny days and nights of sweet repose, clung to it for growth and protection.

Down the river floated the little cavalcade—Nick Whiffles on the lead. Was the old man so loth to part with Ned that he would not leave him? At the Portage to the English river, the party "shored" and passed on foot, through the forest, over to the stream down which to float to Fort Churchill. And yet, Old Nick left them not. Down to the fort they dropped and Ned and Nick Whiffles passed its portals together, hand clasped in hand.

Great was the excitement and joy at the fort over the remarkable events which had transpired, and a general jollification took

place, while the Company's transport, lying at the little dock, was carefully fitted up for three additional passengers.

The third day witnessed the departure. The white wings of the trim brig-rigged vessel were shaken out; and slowly she headed for the northward. On the dock stood Nick Whiffles, with bared head, waving his cap in adieu to his dear boy, whom the seas were to separate from him. Ned, standing on the after-deck, gazed upon, and signaled to, the dear old man, until, down in the horizon, disappeared departed ones and those left behind.

"Miona is my only son, now!" murmured the old forester, as, leaving the dock, he dropped into his canoe, and soon was lost in the mazes of the grim forest around.

"The gal's got me round the heart-strings, an' when my boy comes ag'in, as he promised, she shall be thar to welcome him, or Nick Whiffles' skul'll be dryin' in a Blackfoot lodge."

THE END.

(For Part Second of "Phantom Princess," see "Blackfoot Queen," on first page.)

We are happy to announce as soon to appear, a new romance by a celebrated writer of Forest Fiction, viz: "THE AVENGING ANGELS: A Romance of the Scoto," so full of the interest of deadly peril and high devotion—of a father's affection and a lover's grand resolve—of Indian guile and a borderman's craft—as to make it a worthy successor to this most popular border tale of the year.

THE COLLEGE RIVALS:
OR,
THE BELLE OF PROVIDENCE.

BY DR. WM. MASON TURNER,
AUTHOR OF \$50,000 REWARD, THE RUBY KING, MABEL VANE, MASKED MINER, ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.
THE SPECTRAL SHIP.

A YEAR of suffering and heart-woe passed there—Madeleine working diligently and constantly, and making a small pittance day by day; her father praying piteously for the Rover.

Welcome Hoxley thrived in business, and was content with his triumph over his old rival. But, as yet, he had not paid for the mansion or cottage, both of which were lying unoccupied.

He and his creditors in the matter were satisfied about the payment, which of course was good.

Another year had passed, with its sorrows and joys, its troubles and triumphs.

The memorable birth-night of Madeleine Fleming had at last arrived.

The night was cool, not cold; for the winter had been mild, and neither the cove nor the bay had been covered with ice. A brilliant moon shone down calm and clear; but the glittering orb was fast sinking toward the far horizon.

Ralph Ross had graduated and was preparing to practice law. Stephen Smith was attending to his studies, and was simply to be with his friend Fenton.

But this was Madeleine's birth-night again, and the humble home of old Arthur Fleming was lit up from top to bottom, as of old, in honor of the occasion; nothing more.

A small table of refreshments stood unpretendingly in a corner of the little parlor. Fenton Thorne and Stephen Smith were there—the only company—each having already deposited his present on the table, and spoken heartfelt congratulations with the daughter, and soothed the old man, tenderly, in his dreamings of the Rover.

Ten o'clock was near, and still the festive eve was celebrated, quietly and happily.

Suddenly there came a distant, murmuring sound. It grew louder, and came nearer and nearer. Then the cry of "FIRE!" swelled over the city.

That clamor echoed in the little parlor of Arthur Fleming, the penitiles.

Then a ruddy glare glinted red and ghastly through the fibers of the thin, cheap curtains, and glowed dull and menacing on the bare walls of the humble apartment.

"Come! come!" cried Madeleine, "let us ascend to the roof, and see where the conflagration is."

They quickly mounted to the top of the house, through the sky-light. The old man went too. Childishly, he wanted to see the fire, and hear the uproar in the streets. Stephen Smith guided the old father's tottering steps.

They cast their eyes about them.

The whole sky was red and glowing; but the brilliant crimson toward the west made the party look in the direction of the little manufacturing town of Olneyville.

Madeleine started, as she turned her gaze thitherward.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed; "a factory is on fire! a large one, too! God pity the poor ones who will be made homeless to-night!"

The cries and shouts of the firemen, and the clangor and rumble of the engines rose higher and higher.

Stephen Smith, steady himself, leaned down over the eaves of the house and shouted:

"Where is the fire?"

"At Olneyville! The Hoxley mills are burning!" roared back the fireman as he dashed along.

But, hark!

In the midst of the cries of the red-shirted braves, and the turbulent shouting of the fire-mob, there came another cry.

It came from the shores of the distant bay. First it seemed like a shout; then it became louder and more distinct; then wild, out-welling cheer came booming over the city.

To resume: the Rover had gone to sea with a spanking breeze. After months of storm and tide-calm and blow, she had reached her far-away port in the Orient. The voyage had been successful, and old Captain Kelson, who was strangely, to a disinterested observer, interested in the trip, breathed freer as the heavy anchors rattled down in that far-away haven.

The ship was quickly stowed, packed with her precious cargo, and once again put to sea, on her return voyage.

Jack Kelson was anxious to get back to his straitened employer and he was wise enough to endeavor to catch the trade-winds.

The voyage home was prosperous, to a certain extent. But one dark night, it came on to blow heavily; all hands were called to shorten sail and the skipper himself walked on the deck, trumpet in hand. Suddenly he was felled by a heavy blow, struck from behind.

"Thank God! Thank God! For—the ROVER HAS COME!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SILVER LINING.

From a lofty window, in the rear of his royal mansion, Welcome Hoxley and his imperious daughter watched the raging fire in the distance. The man's face was fearful to look upon; it was wild with anxiety and suspense, and his teeth were sunk deep into the white, bloodless lip.

Still he gazed, and still he drew his labored breath. Reckless of the night-wind, now cold and raw, which swept in from over the bay, the old man leaned, nervously, dangerously out from that tall window, and then he spoke:

"Myra, my daughter, if that factory is mine, I am ruined—and—FOREVER! I am not insured, and—Hallo! there!"

The red-shirted fireman paused.

"What factory is that?" thundered the old man.

"The Hoxley mills, sir! They are destroyed!" returned the unrecking fireman.

At that moment came the wild cheers from the bay; then, the stately, towering spars of a noble ship, sailing along in the red light; then the rattling anchor-chain; then the wild, indistinct, meaningless shout, shaping itself finally into:

"The Rover! The Rover!"

With one startling shriek, Welcome Hoxley threw his hands up; another moment, failing to recover his balance, he reeled, and fell headlong forth from the giddy, gaping window!

And Myra Hoxley sank down on the floor of that lonely garret-room, and gibbered wildly, for reason had fled from her forever!

There was dark gloom setting that night over some in the good old city of Providence, but the somber cloud which had so long hovered over Arthur Fleming, had, at last, shown its silver lining.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TALE OF THE ROVER.

THAT night, the 18th of December, Madeline's birth-night, was one long to be remembered in the good city of Providence, one long to be remembered with gratitude by the humble dwellers in the little tenement-houses in the rear of Broad street, one which certain actors in that scene and participants in the events of that occasion have not yet forgotten.

No one in Arthur Fleming's unpretending abode closed an eye in sleep that night; for, gathered in a close circle in the little parlor, every voice was hushed, as old Jack Kelson, who had by dint of inquiring here and there, in his own blunt manner, found out his old employer, told the thrilling story of the missing Rover.

Welcome Hoxley thrived in business, and was content with his triumph over his old rival. But, as yet, he had not paid for the mansion or cottage, both of which were lying unoccupied.

He and his creditors in the matter were satisfied about the payment, which of course was good.

Another year had passed, with its sorrows and joys, its troubles and triumphs.

The memorable birth-night of Madeleine Fleming had at last arrived.

"Now, Mr. Fleming, I must go and see the old woman and my house of brats, dear brats, Heaven help them!"

But—thank Heaven! my old friend, the Rover is in, safe and sound! and my name is not Jack Kelson, if she has not beneath her hatches, a cargo, worth in the market to-day, three hundred thousand dollars!"

It may be well for us, at this point, in order to have the reader thoroughly understand the hittings of this story, to retrace our steps somewhat, to throw some light on certain dark portions of this life-history, to connect a sunnier link, to tie a broken thread. To do this, we must go back to that dark evening, on which certain late lights were burning in the gloom-enshrouded city of Providence.

It may be remembered, that on this somber night, as given in a preceding chapter, Welcome Hoxley, the manufacturer, entertained certain company in his cosy little back-sitting-room.

They were two men, very rough-looking fellows. They were habited as seamens, and their hard, bony hands and bronzed visages confirmed them as such.

Those two men were the first and second mates of the good ship Rover, then lying at anchor in the lower bay, ready for sea. Their errand at the Hoxley mansion was to answer a summons from the wealthy manufacturer; to hearken to a proposition from him, which, in case they accepted, would prove very beneficial to them. These men had been everlastingly sound for some days by the means of letters over a fictitious signature; and when once they had committed themselves, old Hoxley had written to them boldly, requesting, almost demanding, that they come to his house on this certain evening. Myra had been the letter-post between them; she knew every thing that was going on. That night, old Hoxley hesitated not, but made an offer to those rough men, of a large sum of money in gold, and eternal secrecy besides, should they pledge themselves to prevent the return of the Rover.

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Saturday Journal

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ONE YEAR!

With this issue the SATURDAY JOURNAL completes its first year.

That it has been a signal success we are most proud to say.

That it has made a deep impression on the reading and writing public is very true.

No paper ever achieved a more rapid success, or a more enviable reputation, in so brief a period.

Already our list of authors is a galaxy of brilliant names—every one noted for originality, grace, spirit and excellence.

New authors are soon to be added, whose works we are anxious to introduce through our columns—because they are so good.

We use no matter that is not up to our standard of excellence, and demand of all our contributors only their very best work.

The future is all "a summer sea" to us—over which the SATURDAY JOURNAL shall sail richly freighted with real literary treasures.

Benedic!

Contributors and Correspondents.

A. R. B. MS. returned. Judging by MS. we should say the author has yet much to learn before writing for the press. Practice may make perfect, but study, too, is all essential. Much can be done to improve the MS., and a great deal can be done.

The MS. "After Many Years," with some revision, we can use.—MS. "My Reverent Son" is returned.—MS. "Kate Martine," is unavailable, and is returned.—MS. "Quaker's Revenge," we can not use.—MS. "The Villain," is returned, as it will be told in half its words. Also return MS. "Grandmother's Hen." MS. "Edgar Rudolph's Villainy" is decidedly unavailable.—The poem, "I met a Maiden in the Street," is good, but not, however, probably Mr. D.'s own. We can use the copy.—Poem, "Life by May-June," we can not use. No stamp.—Poem, "Twilight Musing," not available. Author is young.—"My Mother's Wig" is very good, but author does not give his name. Writers always should give their true names and copy to the editor.—Poem by "Bessie New" is not by no means worthy, but we can not use them. The author of course did right, in remitting them. Nothing is accomplished by those who never try. Author has power of expression, but has yet to learn the power of rhythm and quality of measure, the art of poetic composition.—We can make no use of the MS. "Little and Large." Is much too long for the story it relates.—The story, "Stella," has the same fault as the MS. "The Paper Girl," except in its space as of value.—We can use "Masque Highways, or Married by Force." We return MS. "Saved from Rain." Author knows very little about writing for the press.

We return "Ode to Galena." The author may know how to row a boat, but evidently he is not a poet.

A. J. C. Alice Cary was a native of Ohio, and fifty years of age. She and her sister Phoebe have lived in New York city since 1850.

A. B. MS. "Eve Lawless" wants to write something about love." We should say that Eve already had written much about it; but, doubtless, something more is on her tablets in regard to the "divine passion."

BRASKEMAN wishes to know the general signals for brakemen on railway trains, and the chance for a green hand to obtain a situation. These signals are given by the following: one short whistle, put on brakes; two whistles, let off brakes; three whistles, all clear. The chance of getting a situation as brakeman is the same as the chance in any other business. Without friends to speak for you it is doubtful. Apply to the railway officials.

SHADY is a young gentleman, who is very bashful in the presence of ladies, although talkative enough in the presence of men. He is a good boy, and in his place, seek the society of ladies as much as possible; talk to them upon the current topics of the day as you would to a gentleman friend. Don't be afraid to let them know you are a good boy. There is a young man in the world that a sensible girl despises. It is a gentleman who imagines that a woman has a soul above silly compliments and fulsome flattery. A woman is only flesh and blood like yourself; perhaps a rarer and purer spirit fills the mortal clay—there is no room for a soul above yours. You should appreciate the man who approaches her with a delicate deference due not to her beauty, but to her womanhood. In meeting a lady friend on the street, show by the pleasant smile on your face, as well as by the honest frankness of your heart, that you are pleased to see her. By all means seek the society of the ladies. A man is not half a man who has not a true man's heart to sympathize with him, belongs that heart to wife, sweetheart or friend. Beadle's Dictionary of Law and Practice gives some excellent rules, etc., but, really, all rules are only aids to those who aim at a wider field of courtesy and politeness than to "please the ladies."

SANCTUM. We have never heard of the author that you inquire about. His name does not appear in the catalogues of our great libraries. He certainly can have no extended reputation.

O. C. H. wishes to know if Wales gives (pays) a bonus to Englishmen for the custom of paying regular tribute to the Sultan of Turkey. His last novel, "The Musketeers," is a tale of the Cross of Timberville." It has not been published. The MS. is in the safe in the SATURDAY JOURNAL office.

SCALP-HUNTER wishes to know the name of the last story written by Captain Mayne Reid. His last novel, "The Musketeers," is a tale of the Cross of Timberville." It has not been published. The MS. is in the safe in the SATURDAY JOURNAL office.

YOUNG AUTHOR says: "I am reading a story of English life now being published in your city (New York), and from certain passages in it, I have an idea that it is republished from some English magazine or paper." Your guess is probably correct. It is a common notion that we send some of our best publishers, who are either too poor, or too miserly to pay for original matter, to copy from English publications. As a general rule, this disease works its own cure, for, hardly one English writer out of a

hundred suits our American readers, and the "scions" established in this country, and in a number of cases of the same journal, we find a lament regarding native authors! Pretty much the same as if a man should take a baby by the throat, strangle it to death, and then wonder why it died.

R. E. G. is a New York clerk, who receives a salary of one thousand dollars per year, with a good prospect of an advance. He is a good man, and loves his wife, and has and wishes to know if we consider it imprudent for him to marry, and if it is possible for two to live on his scanty salary. Before we attempt to answer the question, we should know something of the lady. Is she a good woman? But if your intended wife is a "Girl of the Period," who despises home and household affairs; who looks upon her husband, not as a man whom she must love and honor, but as an necessary evil, to be submitted to, if she but pays the rent, and the bill for new clothes? If she but places the mother of the present generation, who had few servants and prided themselves upon their skill in household matters: we say, marry her by all means. You can live, even in New York, on a mere pittance, and have a comfortable home, and a comfortable wife, if you will not be miserly, and save every cent for every half ounce. In the choice of matter, preference will be given to those contributions (excellence being equal) which are shortest.

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MECHANIC writes: "I notice advertisements in various weekly papers that certain parties for ten dollars will teach a person to be a good carpenter. What can be learned by such a person?"

Y.—We were in the Express office in Providence, some months ago, when a man came in with a box of "samples" that he had paid ten dollars for. He had taken a home and office, and had a box back, and saw what could be done about the matter. The box contained three little sticks, "kirdling wood samples." He attached the money in the hands of the Express agents, and, by that means, recovered a little of his own. Have nothing to do with the advertisers who offer something for nothing. It can't be done!

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of the pirate crew, that men say, haunt the cove after nightfall. I'll cast my net there this very night. Perhaps I may bring from beneath the waves some of the golden cargo of the buried ship."

"Oh, think of the danger!" Una murmured.

"I will brave every thing for thy sake!" he replied, undaunted. "One last kiss and then farewell, perhaps forever."

Sadly the lovers parted.

The night came. Earth, sea and sky were plunged in darkness. The moon hid itself behind the clouds.

The hour of nine was past when the young fisherman, net in hand, stood upon the strand whereon the waters of the Pirate's Cove leaped in little rippling waves.

The boiling surf had broke in fierce fury at his feet until he reached the cove; there, all was calm and still; the waters black as ink.

"Oh that I could dive down beneath those waves and bring to the light the golden treasures of Rollo of the Red Hand!" exclaimed Hendrik, as he stood upon the shore and looked wistfully on the still waters of the cave.

"And why can you not?" asked a hoarse voice at his elbow.

Hendrik turned in astonishment and beheld a dark form standing by his side.

He could frame an answer, the moon shone forth clear, and by its light the fisherman saw that the stranger was a powerfully-built man dressed in a strange fashion. A steel breast-plate protected his chest, and from the polished surface of the steel, water was dripping; a tunic of coarse cloth covered his person to the knee, his legs were bare, the feet protected by sandals of hide. On his head a helmet of polished brass gleamed fitfully in the moonlight. A huge red beard covered the stranger's chin, and rough red locks curled from under the edge of the helmet. Drops of water were gleaming on his helmet and streaming from his hair. The stranger leaned upon a massive sword, and as the fisherman looked fearfully into his face, he saw that it was as white as the face of a corpse.

The teeth of the fisherman chattered with fear.

"Who are you?" Hendrik cried. "Speak, in the name of—"

"Hush!" the stranger said, warningly, "mention nothing holy in my presence. I am Rollo of the Red Hand, the master of the pirate ship that lies buried beneath yonder waves, ten fathoms deep. There is gold enough there to buy thy bride a hundred times—I know all—and thou shalt have the money on one condition. And that is, if thou wilt take my place beneath the waves in the buried ship, for four and twenty hours. Fear no harm; at the expiration of that time thou canst return to earth and the gold is thine. I am suffered to remain on earth for that time if I can find a mortal willing to take my place below."

"But, my Una will be pledged to another to-morrow morn."

"I can prevent that. I will stay the miler. He shall not have thy Una."

"Well, I consent!" cried Hendrik, desperately.

The moon covered the earth with darkness.

When it again shone forth, no form cast a shadow on the strand of the Pirate's Cove.

That night the wind veered to the north and a terrible storm swept along the Nor-way coast.

Old sailors crossed themselves and muttered that the devil himself must surely be loose.

The morning came bright and beautiful after the dreadful tempest of the night.

Quite a little knot of people were assembled in the best room of the "Golden Anchor," for the determination of old Applegren to betroth his daughter to one of her two lovers, had been reported around among the villagers.

Una sat in a corner, pale and dejected, for Hendrik the fisherman, had not been seen that morning by any one.

Old Applegren and Charlsen, the miller, sat chattering together. In his huge pocket, in a canvas bag, the miller carried the hundred rix-dollars.

Ten o'clock came.

Then old Applegren arose.

"The fisherman, Hendrik Lytken, has not come; so pay me the hundred rix-dollars, neighbor Ola, and Una is yours."

"Hold on!" cried a hoarse voice, and then the door opened with a whirr, and the fisherman, Hendrik Lytken, stalked into the room.

His face was pale as death, and the salt water was dripping from his yellow hair.

With a heavy hand he dashed down a leather bag upon the table. The bag was rotten—soaked with water, and bursting open with the shock, gold pieces, stamped in many a strange fashion, rolled out upon the table.

All started with amazement.

"There's the hundred rix-dollars, and now I claim the fulfillment of the bargain," Hendrik cried, hoarsely.

"The saints preserve us! where got you this money?" asked the father, in wonder.

"Where you suggested; beneath the waves, in the buried ship of Rollo of the Red Hand," replied Hendrik.

"What! eh?" cried all in astonishment, except Una.

She had risen in joy at her lover's abrupt entrance, but now she stood like a statue, with her gaze fixed intently upon the face of the young fisherman.

"I tell you I dove beneath the waves, grappled with this treasure and brought it to the strand," cried Hendrik, with a fearless air, and a wicked light gleaming in his blue eyes.

"The saints protect us!" exclaimed the old man, in wonder, "I would not have done such a thing for all the gold in Norway."

"Why, what would you fear?" asked the fisherman.

"The spirits of the pirate crew; 'tis said they guard the ocean treasure," replied Applegren.

"Yes, and I remember, years ago, hearing my father tell how the spirit of Rollo, the Sea King, sometimes is allowed to revisit the earth, provided he can get a mortal to take his place beneath the waves, and if, while on the earth in his mortal shape, he can induce a pure maiden to accept him for a husband, her soul goes to the Evil One, and a hundred years' respite from the fires below is given him," said the miller, earnestly.

"What folly!" cried Hendrik, scornfully.

"But come; I claim my bride."

"You see, neighbor—" said Applegren to the miller.

"Say no more; a bargain is a bargain," replied the miller, calmly. "The young

man has fulfilled the condition; and, as for myself, I'll keep the dollars and do without the wife."

And so it was settled that the marriage should take place that afternoon.

Hendrik asked for a bed. He was evidently suffering under some strong emotion.

He did not even approach the maid that he had risked his soul to gain.

The fisherman laid down and slept like—well, the watching gossips thought more than once that he was dead.

The priest came at three, and with a start the fisherman awoke. And when he got up, the water was still dripping from his hair.

The bridal party entered the little church.

As they passed in, Hendrik took Una's hand and imprinted a kiss upon her lips; but both his hand and his lips were cold as ice and froze the blood in her veins.

As they stood before the altar a horrible suspicion entered Una's mind.

With Una to think was to act.

Silently, she dipped her fingers in the holy water and sprinkled the drops upon the face of the bridegroom.

With a howl of despair he rushed from the church, ran to the Pirate's Cove, leaped in, and as the waters closed around him, the horrified people, who had followed, saw, instead of the face of the fisherman, the ghastly features of Rollo of the Red Hand.

A few moments after, the waves washed to the shore the senseless form of Hendrik.

Eagerly they tended him, and at last he recovered, but never to mortal did he tell the secrets that he beheld beneath the waves.

Una on her knees thanked the blessed Virgin that had saved her from being the bride of the doomed pirate.

Hendrik and Una were married. On stormy nights, Hendrik talks in his sleep and tells of his strange wanderings beneath the waves in the buried ship.

Isoline.

A VENETIAN TALE.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

THE day had been simply perfect. Above the spires, domes and minarets of wave-laved Venice curved a deep, bright blue sky, cloudlessly serene; such a sky as we of the Northern land seldom enjoy.

The air was balmy and fragrant; the

heads of half the young men in her beautiful Venice.

Between herself and Isoline, strange to say, there had never existed the fond tie of sisterly affection one would naturally expect; petty jealousies, small envyings, and outright quarrels, were of more frequent occurrence than affectionate demonstrations and sisterly confidences.

But, since the announcement of the engagement between Isoline and young Mazzochi, a change had taken place in Cecilia's demeanor.

From her haughty, arrogant manner, she grew tenderer, kinder, and Isoline's heart was softened by her sister's warm encomiums on her lover.

The days sped on, and grand preparations for the wedding were commenced; Mazzochi and Isoline planned out their future blissful career, while Cecilia suggested, advised or improved their arrangements. Of course the event was the talk of the city; all the noblesse were to grace the nuptials with their presence; happiness seemed to have covered the old ancestral castle as with a joyous wing, while Isoline in her passionate, impetuous love, counted the days, then the hours, till she should never more be parted from Vincent. At length, clad in her trailing robes of virgin purity, decked in rare jewels, and with lightsome heart, Isoline stood ready in her chamber to await the coming of her bridegroom.

Waited, but waited in vain: for, instead of Vincent Mazzochi hastening to greet his bride, came the news that he had flown with Cecilia! Hours before, while the maids were arraying the bride in her costly attire, Cecilia had stolen away, and, by previous agreement, met young Mazzochi at the foot of the stairs and gone over the blue waters to a vessel bound for a foreign port.

Stricken dumb and senseless by the stupefying blow, Isoline never screamed, or cried, or moaned; only hour after hour would she sit, for days after, watching at the window where she was wont to watch for her lover's coming; refusing to have her bridal robes removed.

Then, when the unnatural apathy wore off, they learned her reason had fled with it; the light had gone from her once-beautiful eyes, the song from her lips.

For several months strict watch was kept over her. Then, one unlucky night—on was it a good fortune that brought rest and peace to her?—she stole softly from her chamber; down the cold, stone stairs, and into her little gondola, the one her cruel lover had rowed her in so often in happy

a manner as to make me think I saw it? or was it she, the beautiful, doomed girl?

Out on the calm bay, floated a tiny, gilded barge, and a tall figure, with its sad, haunting eyes gazing past us into the light, silvery distance, its hand outstretched as if calling down Heaven's help, its hair waving against the white, pallid face, and a hand grasping a gilded oar.

I pointed to it, as it silently floated past.

Harry laughed.

"Your imagination is good, my dear. That is old Thisbe, the gondolier, halting that sail-boat out yonder. How the moonlight silvers up his old rickety barge! Hey, there, Thisbe! fine night!"

The old fellow made an answer, and that moment the illusion vanished, and with a half-sigh, I turned round to matter-of-fact Harry.

"Well, I don't want to hear any more delicious legends."

Nor do I; lest they turn out to be Thisbe's.

The White Witch: OR, THE LEAGUE OF THREE.

A STRANGE STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "HEART OF FIRE," "WOLF DEMON,"
"SCARLET HAND," "ACE OF SPADES," ETC.

CHAPTER X.

BENDING STEEL.

A COUNTESS?" said Leone, in astonishment.

"Exactly; a countess," repeated O'Connel, slowly.

"Are you jesting with me?" she asked.

"Oh, no; far from it. I only ask you a simple question. How would you like to be a countess?"

"I can not answer the question until I know the reason why you put it," replied Leone, who was utterly at a loss to account for the strange words of her visitor.

"What has your past life been?" asked O'Connel, suddenly.

"You know as well as I," Leone answered, bitterly.

"True, I do. Shall I speak of the past?"

"As you please," said the girl, quietly and coldly.

"A life of misery."

"Very true," Leone said, sadly.

"And that misery accompanied by—shall

even when they are within sight, and about to enter the haven of safety. We can even see them—see the sinking sun gleam on the masts of beaten gold and playing in lines of rippling light on the shimmering sails of silk; then comes the blast, and darkness hides the bark from our sight. A man becomes suddenly rich, Leone; his ships have come in. Few men in this world, my girl, that in their day-dreams have not visions of the ships that may come to port at any moment and make them wealthy men."

"And your ships?" questioned the girl, who suspected that he concealed some special meaning in his fanciful words.

"Are coming in!" he cried, gayly, "and here, behold! the first installment of the cargo."

Then he drew from his pocket-book two checks, and laid them in the lap of the girl.

"Atlantic bank—three thousand dollars.

First National—three thousand dollars, payable to Lionel O'Connel or order!" exclaimed the girl, in amazement, as she examined the drafts.

"Exactly, making six thousand dollars in all!" said O'Connel, in a tone of triumph.

"Why, this is a small fortune!"

"Nothing to what I will have, before I'm a year older," said O'Connel, in a tone of settled conviction.

"Have you again stained your soul with a crime?" asked the girl, with a shudder.

"Hush! how dare you!" cried O'Connel, springing to his feet, in anger. "Walls have ears! be careful for your own sake, if not for mine. Foolish girl, why do you speak of the past? Let it bury its dead, and don't dig them up again."

He paced the room for a few minutes, biting his nails, nervous, then he cooled down and again resumed his seat.

"Leone, there's a brilliant future before you. No longer a poor music-teacher, dependent upon the caprices of others, but you shall be a very queen. Leone, you are a beautiful woman; diamonds will shine with double lustre in contrast to that glossy, ebony hair. You shall have diamonds, every thing—almost—in this world that you wish for. Come, isn't the prospect a bright one?"

"And the price that I am to pay for all this?" asked Leone, slowly, a strange light gleaming in her eyes.

"Price?" said O'Connel, in some confusion.

"Yes, I am not a fool, Lionel; it does not do credit to your usual judgment that you take me for one. You paint a brilliant future, and to enjoy that future I shall have to pay a costly price. Deal with me fairly; you will find it better in the end."

For a moment O'Connel watched the cold, impassive face of the girl.

"By Jove! Leone; I believe that you are right!" he cried, suddenly. "I will deal fairly with you. I am going to take you from this miserable hole and place you in one of the first-class up-town hotels. Give the world to understand that you are the daughter of a French count, who has been killed in the war. You are without relatives and have sought a home in this country. Your mother was an English lady, hence the ease with which you speak English. As for the French, you know that there are few better French scholars than you. You shall have plenty of money to assist you in carrying out the deception."

"But the object of all this?" asked the girl; "you have some object, of course."

"Yes—" then O'Connel paused; the explanation was not so easy as he had imagined.

"Well, I am waiting," Leone said, watching O'Connel's face, keenly, with her brilliant eyes as she spoke.

"There is in New York a certain man who has three enemies. These three wish to ruin this man—"

"And they call upon me to aid

the man whom, doubtless—for I know your fiery nature—you love better than you do your own life!"

"Yes, that is true, for I would willingly risk my own life to save him from peril!" cried Leone, quickly. "He inspires love without knowing it. The younger sister of Frances Chauncy, Agatha, loves him with all the passion of her nature, yet I do not think that he even dreams that she loves him."

"Come, accept my offer; ruin this man, and then you can have him all to yourself," said O'Connell, coolly.

"I will not," returned the girl, almost fiercely.

"You will do nothing else!" exclaimed O'Connell, a lurking bond shining in his eyes.

"What do you mean?" Leone's blood was up, sparkled in her eyes and flushed her pale cheek.

"Why, that I will force you to do my will!" replied O'Connell, sternly. "Foolish girl, do you forget the bond that binds us together—the bond of blood?"

Leone's head sunk at his words.

"Shall I call back the memory of the past?" he continued, fiercely. "call back the scene that made you my slave?"

"Then do my will—you must—you shall! I know the strength of the bond between us, and if you do not, you shall learn it!"

"Oh, spare me!" moaned the girl.

"No, you will find no mercy in me," replied O'Connell, sternly. "Consent; brave me, if you dare!"

"I do not," the girl cried, in agony.

"You consent?"

"Yes, I will do your will."

CHAPTER XI.

THE DORG-FANCIER.

THAT he was the victim of a terrible plot flashed instantly into Montgomery's mind.

Small time had he for thought.

Involuntarily he thrust out his arms, and catching the sides of the trap with his hands, he held himself suspended over the dark gulf.

Little chance had he for escape, however, for "honest Tom, the Mouse" approached Montgomery with a huge club, that he had kept concealed behind him, and raised it high in air to dash it down upon the head of his victim.

With a desperate effort, Montgomery strove to raise himself from the trap and escape the blow, which seemed destined to crush him, a stunned and bleeding mass, to the bottom of the dark pit.

But Angus Montgomery was not fated to meet his death at the hands of "The Mouse."

A new-comer upon the scene changed the aspect of affairs.

Through a little window in one side of the room a man dashed into the apartment, revolver in hand.

One look "The Mouse" gave at the man who had so unceremoniously entered the room, and then, with a howl of rage, the rough dropped the club and disappeared through the door by which he had entered.

"Though lost to sight, to memory dear!" cried the stranger, striking a tragic attitude in the center of the apartment, and gazing after the fleet-footed "Mouse" with a regretful expression upon his face.

Montgomery swung himself clear of the trap and gained his feet again.

"And he never left me a lock of his hair!" continued the stranger, who was the man with the quill tooth-pick, who had followed "The Mouse" and Montgomery down Broadway.

"I believe I owe you my life!" exclaimed Montgomery, gazing with horror at the dark opening in the rotten floor, that had so nearly proved a grave to him.

"Don't mention it; these little accidents will happen in the best of families," said the man, coolly.

"Accident?" cried Montgomery! "the infernal villain planned my death!"

"He is quite capable of it. Oh! he's a sly one, he is!"

"How did it happen that you came so aptly to my assistance?" asked Montgomery.

"Well, you see, it's just like a story in one of the picture-books. I saw you and this tidy young man—who never stopped to shake with me—such ingratitude!—a-going down Broadway. I had a sort of curiosity to know where you were going and so I followed on a-hind. When you entered these gay and festive halls—this scene of dazzling light—represented by that 'ere penny dip, I saw how the cat jumped and I just came in after you. Luckily for you, the front room was empty and a little window looked from that room into this one. It was werry neatly done—quite a surprise party!" and he chuckled quietly to himself.

"You thought that I had walked into a trap then?"

"A reg'lar one and no mistake; he's a rum 'un, that 'Mouse' is. What he ain't up to, ain't worth knowing," said the man, reflectively.

"My banker absconded, recently, with quite a large amount of my money. This fellow offered to conduct me to his hiding-place. I fell into the snare—depending upon my strength to keep me from danger—and unhesitatingly accompanied him. I can hardly understand the motive for the attack, unless it was for the purpose of robbery, and I have very few valuables about me."

"Handsome tickler that of yours!" said the man, pointing, "or leastways I judge so from the looks of the chain."

"Watch and chain are worth two-fifty," Montgomery replied.

"Why, bless your innocence! there's roughs 'round here that would take your life for a five-dollar note, and if they were a little drunk, they'd do it for a glass of whisky."

"I suppose we had better get out of this. This fellow may return with assistance," Montgomery said.

"Oh, there ain't any danger," replied the stranger, coolly. "'The Mouse' won't come back 'cos he's wanted; and he ain't going to be jugged, if he knows it."

"Wanted?" said Montgomery in wonder.

"Yes, some blue-coated gents are anxious to make his acquaintance."

"Oh, I understand—the police."

"Exactly."

"Are you one of the Metropolitan detectives then?"

"Well, now I never!" said the man, in wonder. "Do I look like one of them fellows? I wouldn't have thought it!"

"I supposed so by the sudden flight of this ruffian at your appearance."

"You know what the poet says, 'the feier wot prigs, doth fear each—what d'y-

call-it—an officer!' Them ain't exactly the words, but them's the ideas," spouted the stranger, in theatrical style.

"Very true!"

Then the stranger led the way into the street.

"I beg parding, but if you are going up Broadway, I'll walk along with you as far as the Metropolitan," the stranger said.

"Certainly" Montgomery replied.

Then the two proceeded onward.

"By the way, I should like to offer you something for this service, if you won't feel offended, for I am sure that I owe you my life," Montgomery said, slowly.

"I will not," returned the girl, almost fiercely.

"You will do nothing else!" exclaimed O'Connell, a lurking bond shining in his eyes.

"What do you mean?" Leone's blood was up, sparkled in her eyes and flushed her pale cheek.

"Why, that I will force you to do my will!" replied O'Connell, sternly. "Foolish girl, do you forget the bond that binds us together—the bond of blood?"

Leone's head sunk at his words.

"Shall I call back the memory of the past?" he continued, fiercely. "call back the scene that made you my slave?"

"Then do my will—you must—you shall! I know the strength of the bond between us, and if you do not, you shall learn it!"

"Oh, spare me!" moaned the girl.

"No, you will find no mercy in me," replied O'Connell, sternly. "Consent; brave me, if you dare!"

"I do not," the girl cried, in agony.

"You consent?"

"Yes, I will do your will."

"Angus Montgomery," replied the young man; "here's my card!" Then he penciled his address on it, "and that is my residence."

"I shan't lose it," said the stranger, stowing it away carefully in a greasy wallet, much the worse for wear, that he drew from his pocket.

"And what is your name?"

"Christopher Pippin; I'm a dorg-fancier," the stranger replied, with a grin.

"Yes, I deals in all kinds of dorgs; perhaps you want to buy a dorg?"

"No, thank you," Montgomery replied.

"I don't have any particular place to hang out; I lives round in spots," and Mr. Pippin grinned, good-naturedly, as he made the candid confession.

A sudden thought occurred to Montgomery.

"How would you like to enter my service?" he asked, "not as a servant but as a sort of a steward—a confidential man to look after my interests?" Montgomery had taken a great fancy to the unknown who had come so timely to his rescue.

"I can't do it—much obliged to you for the offer!" Mr. Pippin said, with a solemn shake of the head. "It wouldn't suit me. I like my liberty too well. But, if you ever happen to need the services of a man that you can depend on, you can reach me by a note left at 'The Grapes' in Houston street."

"You mean the little English ale saloon near Crosby?"

"Yes, and I am generally in there 'bout noon to get a drop."

"You are English, then?"

"A reg'lar Londoner—Bow Bells and all that sort of thing, you know," said Pippin.

By this time they had reached the Metropolitan.

"Hére I stop," said the Englishman, halting.

"Good-night, then," and Montgomery extended his hand to the other. "Mind, if you want a friend come to me."

"Thank ye, and if you need any assistance, don't forget Cris Pippin, as his pals used to call me across the water," replied the Englishman, and so the two parted.

"Strange fancy for a lady's ornaments," said Montgomery, in wonder.

"And her beauty is as odd and wondrous as her jewelry."

"But how do you procure all this information?" Montgomery asked.

"From O'Connell. In some way he heard of the arrival of this beautiful unknown, and, as a newspaper man, he made it his business to 'interview' the lady. To his astonishment, he discovered that she was an old acquaintance. He had met her at Paris. In some way these newspaper writers, you know, manage to get acquainted with almost everybody—he was introduced to the old count, her father, some years ago. Of course the lady was delighted to meet a friend in this strange country. So, you see, O'Connell is first favorite."

"If I get half a chance, I will cut him out," said Stoll, stroking his beard. "I hate to serve a friend so, but all's fair when a pretty woman is in the case."

"Here comes O'Connell now," said Tulip, as he caught sight of the young Irishman advancing up the street.

"O'Connell!" Tulip called, as he came up.

"Ah! good-morning, gentlemen," O'Connell said, gayly; "what's the news?"

"Nothing particular. By the way, I see that you are 'got up,' according to the fashion of the day."

"Rose in your button-hole, immaculate kids. Gentlemen, I lay ten to one that O'Connell is on his way to visit the fair Frenchwoman!" Tulip exclaimed.

"You'd win. I am bound for the Coleman House!" O'Connell said, laughing.

"I promised to take Miss Leone for a drive through the Park this morning."

"Leone? A pretty name!" exclaimed Montgomery.

"Yes, and the woman that bears it is prettier far than the name; but I'd better take care how I praise her too much, or I shall have Montgomery, here, as mad after her as all the rest," O'Connell said, laughing.

"Not much danger of that. You forget, I have never seen the lady."

"Ah! then there's a pleasure in store for you," O'Connell said, quickly. "Come, I'll take care how I praise her too much, or I shall have Montgomery, here, as mad after her as all the rest," O'Connell said, laughing.

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"Exactly."

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"Well, now I never!" said the man, in wonder. "Do I look like one of them fellows? I wouldn't have thought it!"

"I supposed so by the sudden flight of this ruffian at your appearance."

"You know what the poet says, 'the feier wot prigs, doth fear each—what d'y-

fortune has been struck, but—bah! it is an accident. Who can foretell the future?" A wise question. Who can answer it?

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER BIRD FOR THE DORG-FANCIER.

A WEEK after Montgomery's arrival in New York, walking down Broadway one fine morning, he met Tulip Rocha and Herman Stoll.

"Any news of Catlin?" Tulip asked.

"No; there isn't much doubt about his escape with his plunders," Montgomery replied.

"I heard that it was fifty thousand that he let you in for," Tulip said.

"That's a capital idea!" exclaimed Tulip;

"how are you going to manage it?"

"Oh, simply enough. I ordered a small safe to-day that I intend to keep in my bed-chamber, and in that safe I intend to put all my bonds, etc."

Again Tulip and Stoll exchanged looks.

This was valuable news for the conspirators.

"By the way, Montgomery, have you seen this new beauty who is dazzling the eyes of all the young bloods?" Tulip asked.

"No; who is she?"

"Pon my life, it's difficult to say!" exclaimed Stoll, joining in the conversation;

"there are so many reports about her."

"She's enough to excite any one's curiosity!" cried Stoll, quickly.

"She's enough to excite any one's curiosity!" cried Stoll, quickly.

"She's the prettiest woman that I have ever seen; and I flatter myself that I know a pretty woman when I see one."

"Her diamonds, too, are magnificent!"

"All wrong, I assure you, Stoll!" cried Tulip.

"Well, I only repeat what I have heard," he replied.

"What you say, Tulip,

SATURDAY JOURNAL.

87

"Yes," answered Zoe, laughing a little at his embarrassment; "it was part of one you wrote me more than a year ago."

Brett drew the little hand more closely through his arm, and held it fast.

"Zoe, dearest, my feelings have not changed since I wrote that letter. May I hope that yours toward me have?"

Zoe's answer may be inferred from the fact that, six months later, the fashionable world received cards for the most distinguished wedding of the season—that of Brett Chapman and Zoe Delaney. Miriam Doyle was first bridesmaid, and gladly acknowledged that her friend's prophecy had been fulfilled, and that she had indeed won for her husband the best and noblest of men.

Two Strange Seamen.

BY WILLIAM COMSTOCK.

BEING astray in New York, the weather cold, and my pocket nearly empty, I shipped on board the George Warren, a little, old ship lying at Coenties Slip, bound up the Straits, and belonging to Cape Ann. She had advertised for hands, and, at the time, there was only one old man belonging to her, besides the captain and mate. The old man, whose name was Stockton, said he belonged to Cape Ann and was well acquainted with all the captain's relatives; he boasted that he could fly up the rigging and haul a top-gallant-sail as well as the youngest; and, on the strength of these self-recommendations, he suggested that he would not refuse to take a drink if I had the money to pay for it.

We went to the corner grocery and regaled ourselves accordingly. When we got back to the ship, a cart had arrived with the other hands. We assisted in lifting them on board and stowing them away in the forecastle.

Here was a hopeful crew: one old man who, notwithstanding his assertions to the contrary, was nearly useless on board, and never got above the leading-blocks, and half a dozen men so drunk that we were obliged to handle them like so many logs of wood, and get them under deck lest they should freeze to death.

On the next morning, the pilot came on board, and we went through the Narrows and out to sea with squared yards, the breeze being strong and directly aft. We stowed cables that day, the greater part of the crew being unable to assist in the work.

Several days passed before the topers completely recovered, although they would go aloft and do what they could. On such occasions I expected, every moment, to see two or three of them tumble from the yards; but they were, for the most part, experienced seamen, and as much at home on the reeling mast as a young lady is in her boudoir.

As they recovered from the effect of their spree on shore, two of them exhibited first-rate ability as seamen. One of them was quite good-looking; the roses came to his cheeks, and his eyes, as blue as the sea, shone with intelligence. The eyes of the other had a leaden appearance, almost like the eyes of a dead man. He was a good seaman, but did every thing mechanically, and seemed to take no interest in any thing, not even in eating, or in drinking the grog which was liberally served out to us by the captain. He seldom spoke, and when anybody addressed him, he simply looked at the speaker with those dead, expressionless eyes of his, and turned away with a half-smile to his blue-eyed companion. The latter stated that he had sailed several voyages with Mendum—the name by which the former had shipped—and that he was a man of first-rate education. It was difficult to believe that one would have judged from his appearance that he was equally devoid of intelligence and of sentiment.

After we had fairly got into the "deep, deep sea," it was observed that Mendum and his friend talked a great deal together during the night-watch. Seated apart from the rest of the crew, the low humming of their voices was heard during the greater part of the watch. It was also noted that they became suddenly silent when any one approached them.

When old Stockton, who belonged to the other watch, heard of this, he held up his hand, with the stiff fingers crooked, and shook it in a peculiar manner. What he meant by that, nobody knew. Therefore, the gesture was the more significant, as it left a free play for the imagination.

One day, when I was standing at the helm, the captain asked me if I knew any thing about the foremost hand who called himself Mendum. Of course, I answered in the negative.

"It seems almost as if I must have sailed with him before: his face looks so natural," added the captain, as he turned away.

On the next night, I was standing at the helm during the middle-watch; we were but three days sail from Gibraltar; the mate was walking the deck to keep awake; the breeze was light, and we were going only four knots by the log. The night was cloudy and very dark. The hands who had been talking on the windlass had become suddenly silent.

This lasted several minutes, when I heard the sound and felt the jar of something striking the carline directly under my feet.

Was the captain nailing up something in the cabin? It soon passed from my recollection, and, probably, would never have returned but for events that soon followed. The mate had got as far as the mainmast, in his walk, and paused there as if his attention had been attracted by something. In the next moment he seemed to be smiling with somebody. That was strange: I had never known him to use any freedom with the foremost hands. I could scarcely see him, but the noise as if of two men wrestling continued a moment, and then I heard a heavy splash alongside, as if some heavy body had fallen into the sea.

After that all was silent. In about a quarter of an hour a man whom I took for the mate came aft, and, looking in the binnacle, said:

"Keep her off!" It was a strange voice. I replied that Mr. Priestly had ordered me to steer due east.

"Did you ever die?" said the man, in a tone of concentrated rage. I then perceived that the speaker was Mendum. As I looked up, surprised, he continued: "You will hereafter take your cue from me, young man."

I then knew that something direful had taken place, and remembered the sound which I had heard in the cabin. It struck me, at once, that in raising the ax to chop off the head of the sleeping captain, the eye

of the ax had touched the beam overhead. So it proved. Mendum and his friend had crept along between decks and got into the cabin, where they found the captain and steward asleep. Mendum had split open the head of the former with a sharp broad-ax, while his companion cut the throat of the latter. They then came on deck, and having thrown a bag over the head of the mate, and finally tied a rope around his neck to prevent him from giving an alarm, threw him overboard.

I obeyed the orders of Mendum and put up the helm. We steered for the coast of Africa, intending to take in a few negroes and carry them to Cuba.

The crew acquiesced in every thing Mendum proposed, especially as they now perceived that he could talk, and that he was an expert navigator.

One fine warm evening, as we were nearing the coast, Mendum, having drunk rather more than common, gave us part of his history:

"Hold!" cried old Stockton, springing to his feet; "you say that your real name was Prichard, that you had a brother, named Jonas, who forged a paper, and was permitted to go to sea, instead of being sent to State Prison?"

"Ay, old fellow—what then?" demanded Mendum, rather offended at the interruption.

"Well, sir," added the old man; "Jonas did go to sea, and finally grew up a smart man, and sailed out of Cape Ann, and commanded the George Warren."

"What! this ship! how long ago?" cried Mendum, *alias* Prichard.

"Why, you must know that after having been up for forgery he changed his name," said Stockton.

"Very likely," answered the other, with a sigh; "my poor brother! that's the reason I have never been able to fall in with him, though I have sought him high and low, for he was all the world to me."

Old Stockton shook his head, sadly.

"What do you mean by that? Did you not say he once commanded this ship? Where is he now, do you suppose?"

These questions were put in breathless haste by Prichard, who had risen to his feet and approached the old man.

Again old Stockton shook his head in a gloomy manner.

"What that may have been Jonas that we massacred and gave to the fishes?"

Scarcely had he uttered these words when the brother-mutineer of Prichard.

For a moment, the brain of the bloody man seemed to reel; then, with a howl like that of some wild beast, he flew to the ship's side, and leaped into the boiling gulf below.

The waters closed over his head, and the mutineer sank forever. We then rose and bound the surviving mutineer, and soon afterward flinging him with the British brig Buzzard, a captain was put on board of us, and we returned to the United States. The mutineer committed suicide before we came in sight of land.

The Three Gold Links.

STORY OF EARLY CALIFORNIA.

BY "BRUIN" ADAMS.

The discovery of gold amid the mountain valleys and "river bottoms" of California, caused a stream of emigration to flow thither that has never, perhaps, been equaled in the history of the world.

Not only the restless and adventurous from every section of the globe rushed to the gold placers, but men outlawed by society went and found there a broad and fertile field in which to exercise their evil designs.

There could be but one result attendant upon such a state of things. Utter lawlessness became the prevailing condition of society, while the law, its powers not yet organized, was shown to be entirely useless, or rather, incompetent to protect life or property. The people suffered long and patiently under the reign of cut-throats and desperadoes, but at length were forced to adopt the fearful resolution of taking the law into their own hands, and on their own authority inflict such punishment as was necessary to suppress crime and its attendant horrors.

Such, then, was the condition of affairs, when the incident I am about to relate took place, an incident so terrible in its nature, so appalling in its ending, that even the hardened Californian who has become used to almost any and every thing that is startling in its nature, shudders as he recalls it.

What the building was first erected for I know not, but the entire collection were now occupied by a colony of desperadoes of the worst class, a species of head-quarters, from whence they sallied out on their unlawful expeditions, or held counsel with their fellows as to future operations.

Once upon the track of their man, the stern regulators paused not long in running him to earth.

From gambling-hell to drinking-den, and thence to houses of ill-repute, they tracked the murderer with the unerring certainty and eager desire of blood-hounds.

In more than one place the fatal chain was minutely described. The fellow wore it openly upon his vest, though he must have known the danger of doing so.

He was said to be a man of herculean build, possessed of enormous strength, "black muzzled," and fierce in aspect, always heavily armed, and seemingly afraid of neither man nor devil.

How true the description was will be seen. At length the trail was broken for a short time. At a low den, upon the outskirts of the town, he had been seen an hour or two previous, but from there all trace was lost. A few moments' consideration, of low, stern conversation among the band, numbering some twenty-five or thirty determined men, resulted in some one raising the cry of—

"To Hell's Half-Acre! He is there!"—and away the crowd went toward the cluster of houses we have already described, and which was known by the forcible appellation above. In sight of the place the regulators halted to organize and lay their plan of procedure. This occupied but a few moments, and at once they moved silently, steadily forward.

The night was intensely dark. The drifting and rain, the roaring of the wind, as it came sweeping in from oceanward, the crash of thunder and vivid flashes of lightning, all served to make the night a fearful one.

Not a light was to be seen in any of the buildings. All was dark, dreary, and apparently deserted.

But such was far from being the case. The thieves had, somehow, got warning of what was in the wind, and several of the most desperate had collected in the large log-house, determined to defend their den to the last.

As the regulators spread out upon either hand, and drew their cordon around the buildings, a sudden sheet of flame leaped from between the crevices of the heavy logs, and a volley of balls swept through their midst.

The sound was magical in its effect.

Out from the town a tumultuous crowd of excited men, women and young boys rushed, utterly regardless of the storm, only eager to see the celebrated "bank murderer" who had been unheeded away on the wings of the storm.

The following morning a fearful sight met the gaze of those whose duty led them to enter the bank.

Five corpses strewed the floor, three of the bodies being instantly recognized as those of the watchmen, while the other two, burly, brawny ruffians, evidently of the worst class, were entirely unknown.

A fearful struggle had taken place.

The floor, the walls, desks, chairs and counter were literally covered with blood.

Much of the furniture had been smashed or otherwise injured, while here and there the small, round hole in woodwork, or the broad break in plaster, told how hot the fire must have been when so many balls missed their mark.

The strong boxes were broken open and completely rifled of their precious contents. It is impossible to describe the excitement that spread like wild-fire over the town. Men, at first rendered almost helpless by reason of the shock, quickly recovered, and the search for the murderers was begun.

The floor, the walls, desks, chairs and counter were literally covered with blood.

One of the regulators, bearing a torch in his hand, stepped out of the ranks and advanced toward the house.

His object was to demand the surrender of the man they were in search of. The others, he said, even though they had fired upon the people, might go free.

The words were hardly out of his mouth, before he fell, pierced by half a dozen balls fired by the besieged.

This was the signal for a general onslaught.

Like a pack of famished tigers, the infuriated multitude rushed upon the house.

Axes, sledges and crow-bars were rapidly plied under a heavy fire from within. Men fell here and there, and were carried back out of the way, while others took their places, and worked steadily on.

No barrier could have long withstood such a multitude.

It gave way, and with a yell that shook the solid structure to its very foundations, the maddened crowd rushed in.

Instantly the quick detonation of revolvers began to be heard, and then the fight began close and deadly.

But numbers told. One by one the robbers fell, until only one remained, a tall, powerfully-built man, his face nearly concealed by a heavy black beard, across whose waistcoat hung a long *linked chain of gold*.

With the agility of a deer, after seeing the last of his confederates sink under the regulators' fire, he sprang to the foot of a narrow stairway that led above, faced his assailants with cocked pistol, and slowly began the ascent, going up backward.

A dozen pistols were instantly leveled at him, when a voice rang out, "Take him alive! Don't shoot!" causing the uplifted weapons to drop.

A scornful laugh was the desperate man's only reply as he disappeared across the landing above.

In all that crowd of men, many of whom were noted for their "game," not one was daring enough—foolhardy were the better to follow that man up those stairs.

To the first, second, third, and perhaps more, it would be certain death.

"Burn him! burn the villain!" now began to be heard on every side.

The hint took in an instant.

Out of the house they rushed, the last raising the shattered door into its place, and fastening the torch was outside in half a dozen places.

The dry pine wood caught readily, and the red flames, fanned by the rushing wind, lapped upward and around with fearful rapidity.

The crowd drew off, and silently awaited the end.

Higher and higher mounted the devouring element.

It twines round the window-frames, the glass crackles and bursts, the long tongues leap into the upper rooms, and shooting upward seize upon the eaves.

A deathlike silence prevails over the crowd, but a moment since so noisy and turbulent.

With a loud shout announces that something has occurred, and the next instant the stalwart form of the doomed robber was seen to emerge from a hole in the roof, blackened with smoke and soot, gasping for breath, but still defiant, still hurling bitter curses upon those below, *game* to the last.

With an effort he crawled to the comb, and, regaining his feet, drew his form to its utmost height.

Raising his hand as though to command attention, he spoke some words, the exact purport of which could not be gathered by reason of the roar of the flames and shrieking wind, but they were plainly anathemas upon those who had so hunted him down.

Thus he remained while the gathering flames encircled the spot upon which he stood, their sharp teeth cutting away, inch by inch, the frail footing that lay between him and the hell of fire below.

A rafter has given way, another and another. The roof sways and totters, rises and falls, like the swell upon the ocean.

A deafening crash is heard, a loud, sharp report quickly follows, as the murderer discharges the last charge of his revolver into his own brain, and down, down he falls into the glowing red-hot furnace, that yawns to receive its prey.

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